

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199637

FOL RPT BANGKOK 18455 ACTION SECSTATE INFO GENEVA USUN NY
19 AUG 77 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18455

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, TH

SUBJECT: THAI PLAN TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN BONA FIDE AND
NON BONA FIDE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REF: BANGKOK 18304

1. BANGKOK POST AUG 19 CARRIED ARTICLE REPORTING
INTERVIEW WITH DAMRONG SUNTHORNSARATUN, DEPUTY UNDER
SECRETARY OF INTERIOR, TO EFFECT THAT THAILAND WILL
CLASSIFY ALL FUTURE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES INTO TWO
CATEGORIES: 1) THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE IN DANGER, AND
2) THE REMAINDER, WHO WILL BE CONSIDERED " ILLEGAL
ALIENS." FIRST CATEGORY WILL CONTINUE TO QUALIFY FOR
UN PROTECTION. "ILLEGAL ALIENS" WILL BE HOUSED IN
THAI GOVERNMENT-RUN CAPMS, FUNDS FOR WHICH WILL COME
FROM THAI BUDGET. EXISTING UN-SUPPORTED CAMPS WILL
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CONTINUE TO OPERATE SEPARATELY FROM RTG-SUPPORTED
CAMPS.

2. EMBOFF REVIEWED ARTICLE AUG 19 WITH DAMRONG, WHO CON-
FIRMED THAT IT WAS ESSENTIALLY CORRECT. DAMRONG SAID THAT
UNDER THAI-UNHCR AGREEMENT SIGNED JULY 22 IN GENEVA A
DISTINCTION WILL BE MADE BETWEEN PERSONS WHO QUALIFY FOR

UN PROTECTION (BONA FIDE REFUGEES) AND THOSE WHO LEAVE THEIR COUNTRY FOR REASONS OF PERSONAL CONVENIENCE, USCH AS "ECONOMIC MIGRANTS" (NON BONA FIDE REFUGEES). DAMRONG ADDED THAT CABINET HAD APPROVED THE AGREEMENT BUT THAT BUDGET FUNDS TO SET UP CLASSIFICATION MACHINERY AND CAMPS TO HOLD NON BONA FIDE REFUGEES HAVE NOT RPT NOT YET BEEN MADE AVAILABLE. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, HE SAID HE HOPED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO START THE PROGRAM BY NOV 1 AND IN ANY CASE IT WOULD NEED TO BE STARTED BEFORE THE PRESENT AGREEMENT EXPIRED ON DEC 31. DAMRONG SAID THAT THE RTG PLANS TO SET UP THREE OF ITS OWN REFUGEE CAMPS (FOR "ILLEGAL ALIENS"), ONE IN NORTHERN THAILAND, ONE IN NORTHEAST, AND ONE IN GENERAL AREA OF CAMBODIAN BORDER. SPECIFIC SITES HAVE NOT RPT NOT YET BEEN SELECTED.

3. DAMRONG CONCEDED THAT IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN BONA FIDE AND NON BONA FIDE REFUGEES. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT, REGARDLESS OF THE MOTIVATIONS WHICH INSPIRED REFUGEES TO LEAVE THEIR COUNTRIES, IT WILL PROBABLY BE HIGHLY DANGEROUS FOR THEM TO RETURN TO THOSE COUNTRIES, AS THE AUTHORITIES ARE LIKELY TO REGARD THEM AS IMPERIALIST AGENTS. DAMRONG AGREED THAT THIS WAS LIKELY TO BE THE CASE.

4. COMMENT: THIS PROGRAM CLEARLY WILL NOT RPT NOT GET UNDER WAY IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. IT APPEARS TO US THAT RTG
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WANTS TO GET REFUGEE FLOW UNDER ITS DIRECT CONTROL, PERFORMING CLASSIFICATION FUNCTION AND MOVING BULK OF REFUGEES INTO CAMPS OTHER THAN THOSE OPERATED WITH UNHCR SUPPORT. WHAT ULTIMATE DISPOSITION WILL BE OF REFUGEES IN CAMPS OPERATED WITH RTG FUNDS ONLY IS NOT RPT NOT APPARENT AT THIS POINT.
O'DONOHUE

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: REFUGEES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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